Food processing industries in Gujarat

3808. SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of food processing industries set up in Gujarat;

(b) whether Union Government provide support to facilitate overall growth of food processing sector; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TH. CHAOBA SINGH): (a) Food Processing Industries are both in the organised and unorganised sectors and as such, the information regarding the number of food processing industries, State-wise, is not maintained Centrally.

(b) and (c) The Government have taken a number of policy initiatives to promote the growth of processed food sector in the country. Some of these are as under:—

(i) Under the plan shemes of the Department of Food Processing Industries, financial assistance in the form of soft loan and grant is provided to private industries, public sector undertakings, Nongovernmental Organisations, Co-operatives, Human Resource Development Organisations and Research & Development institutions etc. for the development of processed food sector.

(ii) Food Processing Industries have been included' in the list of priority sector for bank lending.

(iii) Most of the processed food items have been exempted from the purview of licensing under Industries (Development & Regulation) Act, 1951.

(iv) Approval for foreign equity in automatic route is available for most of the processed food items except alcohol and beer and those reserved for small scale sector, subject to certain conditions.

(v) It. has been proposed in the Budget 2001-02 to bring down Excise duty from 16% presently to Zero for processed fruits and vegetables.